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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between several components of teacher burnout and various professional factors. Professional factors included professional qualifications, teaching level, professional growth, professional commitment, and role efficacy. Components of teacher burnout included development of negative attitudes toward students (DP), development of increased feeling of emotional exhaustion and fatigue (EE), and tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, leading to lack of personal achievement (lack of PA). The target population included teachers working in formal educational institutions in Greater Mumbai (Bombay), India. They ranged from preschool to college level teachers. Researchers administered a burnout inventory, role efficacy, professional growth, and commitment. Data analysis indicated that there was considerable teacher burnout among respondents. Teachers experienced burnout more in relation to EE than to DP or lack of PA. Role efficacy had negative associations with DP, EE, and lack of PA. Teaching level showed a significant positive relationship with DP and lack of PA. There was a significant negative relationship between EE and teaching level. Professional growth showed a significant nonlinear relationship with DP and lack of PA. Professional commitment had a significant negative relationship with DP and lack of PA. (Contains 21 references.) (SM)

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Impact of Selected Professional Aspects of Teacher Burnout

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Impact of Selected Professional Aspects on Teacher Burnout

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The educational process involves the teacher and the taught. Although, the role of the student is the focus, it is the teacher who is the 'King pin' for, "how" the teacher teaches is more important than "what" is taught. It is this very process that can motivate or bring about indifference in the student. The mental and psychological state of a teacher who is happy and optimistic can influence the teacher's effectiveness, consequently, the student's future. Teaching profession, which once occupied a status of eminence in society, has lost its lustre and does not seem to beckon young enthusiasts towards the profession in the same manner as it did in the past. Studies indicate that teachers work under stress and also experience a high degree of Burnout [BO].

Teacher is referred to as the architect of the future generation. The Burnt out teacher may not be able to rise to the demands of his/her role. Which are the factors that contribute to teacher Burnout? Do the professional aspects affect the Burnout of teachers? The researcher felt compelled to look into some of these issues.

Concept of Burnout

Burnout may be defined as a psychological condition, which is a reaction to job-related stress. CAPEL [1991][1] stated that Burnout is a negative response to long-term stress. MASLACH [1984][2] said that for the people who work continuously with other people, long-term stress can be emotionally draining and can lead to Burnout. "Burnout is a syndrome of Depersonalisation [DP], Emotional Exhaustion [EE] and reduced Personal Achievement [PA] that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind" [KASINATH and KAILASALINGAM 1995][3].

Burnout occurs at the individual level. It is a negative experience for the individual. It involves feelings, motives, attitudes and expectations. It is a negative feeling that leads to exhaustion (both physical and emotional), a feeling of lack of energy, a tendency to view the individuals in a disinterested manner [depersonalisation] and perception of a lack of personal achievement. The individual undergoing Burnout may eat alone instead of partaking his/her lunch with others, thereby avoiding mixing with others. The individual may even respond with cynicism to others. MASLACH and COLLINS [1977][4] state that a 'worker becomes a petty bureaucrat, going strictly by the book and viewing clients as cases rather than as people.' Burnout manifests itself in many different ways that vary in symptom and degree from person to person. It does not manifest itself suddenly. Symptoms of Burnout can occur in four areas of a person's functioning namely: psychological, behavioural, physical and spiritual domains.

- Psychological symptoms include being critical of others, an apathetic attitude, depersonalization, feelings of low personal achievement, frustration, boredom, anxiety, depression, irritability and feelings of alienation and isolation.

- Behavioural symptoms include abuse of chemicals like alcohol and drugs, exhibiting tardiness and absenteeism, sarcasm or cynicism.

- Physical symptoms include a rapid pulse, insomnia, fatigue, reduced resistance to infection, weakness and dizziness, memory problems, weight changes, hypertension and head, back or muscle aches.

- Spiritual symptoms include doubts concerning the value system or beliefs and becoming bitter towards God.

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Teacher Burnout

Teachers work with students. Thus, they do 'people work' of some kind. CLOUSE and WHITEKAR [1981][5] have pointed out that teachers undergo Burnout in three stages.

Stage 1 – Loss of enthusiasm

Most teachers enter the profession with a sincere desire to help the students. Their energy levels may be elevated, ideals strong, value systems decent, sense of motivation high and they nurse an inner hope that something positive can be done about the students. However, when their expectations are not met, the enthusiasm falters.

Stage 2 – Frustration

Frustration is one of the earliest signs of Burnout. Lowered teacher morale at this point will increase the frustration and Burnout level.

Stage 3 – Alienation

Alienation of the professional from the work environment may be viewed as a response or result of powerlessness, frustration and loss of meaning in work. Alienation is associated with detachment, withdrawal and isolation within the work environment.

Thus, a teacher who is undergoing Burnout would perceive a lack of enthusiasm, lowered sense of morale and high levels of frustration, a sense of detachment or withdrawal from work. It is common for teachers as individuals, to feel emotionally exhausted on a given day and, yet, feel rejuvenated on the next. Sporadic feelings of DP, EE or lack of PA are not synonymous with BO as such. The individual is capable of bouncing back to the homeostatic state with appropriate coping skills. It is the long-term effects that lead to BO.

MASLACH views BO as a continuous variable ranging from low to high. Theoretically, low BO is viewed as low DP, low EE and low lack of PA, whereas high BO is viewed as high DP, high EE and high lack of PA. Even though each of the components of BO is viewed along a continuum, these three components are viewed separately and not as a single unit. Consequently, a teacher who is perceiving low DP, high EE and low lack of PA could be at a different level of BO than another who is high on DP, EE and lack of PA.

Teachers who no longer have positive feelings about their students are said to experience DP. Some of the ways in which this depersonalisation may be expressed are using derogatory labels such as 'they are good for nothing' and not being available to them. EE is a feeling of experiencing tiredness and fatigue. Lack of PA is experienced when the teacher feels that the students are not learning and growing. Consequent to this, the teachers may focus on other areas to receive rewards – for example, putting in more time to make money when they perceive a lack of PA.

There has been a growing interest in research on Burnout in India in the past few years. The reason may be the effect of Burnout on the individual and the consequent effect on the organization, leading to large staff turnover, absenteeism, increased intake of alcohol and drug abuse. Teacher Burnout has an additional impact on the society in that the teachers' state of mental health has a direct influence on the educational process. A teacher, who is low on morale, high on frustration and is detached from the students, obviously is not effective in the class. Several studies have been conducted on the BO of teachers by researchers who have used different theoretical approaches to probe into the syndrome of Burnout.

In organizational behaviour literature, work motivation is considered as a basic psychological process, which explains why employees behave as they do in the work place. According to HERZBERG, motivation is based on two sets of factors – intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic factors are called motivator factors and are related to job satisfaction. The extrinsic factors are termed hygiene factors and are related to job dissatisfaction. In order that

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an individual feels job satisfaction, the motivator factors are essential which vary from individual to individual. The hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction, but they do not lead to satisfaction. HERZBERG also stated that the job satisfiers are related to job content and the dissatisfiers are allied to job context. The work involvement and work commitment are the characteristics of the employees who are motivated to work. Studies on Burnout have established positive links with employee characteristics of low levels of responsibility and commitment [CAPEL 1991[6], PIERCE and MOLLOY 1990[7]].

The professional growth factor relates to psychological growth because, growth in knowledge leads to the ability to comprehend new knowledge and integrate it into the existing body of knowledge. Since, meaningful tasks allow for growth, job enrichment is a method of facilitating this growth. Professional growth is one of the characteristics of the motivated teachers because, a teacher has to keep abreast of the latest methods and techniques and improve the pedagogical skills in order to perform effectively. KUMAR [1992][8] found that growth orientation acts as a buffer between stress-strain relationships. However, this study was based on the managers from service and product organizations and not on teachers. BAUSCH [1981][9] reported a study on the lack of professional growth. This study, based on senior and junior high school teachers, reported that teachers experienced a lack of self-esteem through professional stagnation. Although the studies conducted by KUMAR and BAUSCH are based on different samples over a period of time, they appear to corroborate the findings of one another.

Burnout has been studied with reference to contextual factors *i.e.* person-environment fit. LEVINSON [1977][10] refers to two aspects of person-environment fit – the extent to which the individual's skills and abilities match the demands and requirements of the job and the extent to which the environment provides supplies to meet the individual's needs. From the standpoint of the 'person-environment fit theory', the individual's aptitude to the role and the climate of the organization assume importance. This study has considered the role efficacy, which is the potential effectiveness of the individual performing a given role. SEN [1982][11] reported negative and significant correlation between role efficacy and stress at the 0.01 level for bank employees. SAYEED [1985][12] reported negative correlation between work-related tension and overall role efficacy. To the best knowledge of the researcher, there are no reported research findings using role efficacy of teachers.

In the present research, Burnout is defined as a three dimensional concept and has been operationalised as [MASLACH 1993][13]:

- **Development of negative attitude towards students – DP**

The teacher experiencing depersonalisation may withdraw from contact with the students. The teacher may also psychologically withdraw from students by ignoring or refusing to acknowledge them. In extreme cases, the teacher may treat students as impersonal objects, calling them derogatory names or even labeling them.

- **Development of increased feelings of emotional exhaustion and fatigue – EE**

The teacher experiencing emotional exhaustion feels tired and irritable. Often he/she dreads having to get up in the morning to go to work.

- **Tendency to evaluate oneself negatively leading to a lack of personal achievement – lack of PA**

Teachers feel they are not achieving anything worthwhile in their work.

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The professional aspects – PRA - studied in this research are:

- Professional qualifications
- Level of teaching
- Professional growth
- Professional commitment
- Role efficacy

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aims

The broad aim of the study is to find out the relationship between the components of BO – DP, EE and PA – and the professional factors identified for the study.

Objectives

With a view to achieve the aims stated, the following objectives have been formulated.

1. To find the relationship between components of BO of teachers and different professional factors.

a) To find the relationship between DP of the teachers and the categories of PRA
b) To find the relationship between EE of the teachers and the categories of PRA
c) To find the relationship between PA of the teachers and the categories of PRA

[PRA - Professional qualifications, level of teaching, professional growth, professional commitment and role efficacy.]

HYPOTHESES

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated in the null form.

A. There is no relationship between DP and the variables of PRA
B. There is no relationship between EE and the variables of PRA
C. There is no relationship between PA and the variables of PRA

The setting

The study was descriptive and used the quantitative approach to probe into the problem. The locale for the present study was the Metropolis of Greater Mumbai. For the purpose of this study, the target population comprised the teachers working in formal educational institutions in Greater Mumbai whose medium of instruction was English. The educational institutions included the pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, higher secondary and degree colleges, which were unaided [recognized], aided and government-run. The institutions were distributed throughout the metropolis of Mumbai – city, suburbs and extension suburbs. The study was conducted in a typical urban setting.

Validity of researcher developed tools

The study involved the development of two tools by the researcher, which had to be pre-tested and pilot tested before they qualified as reliable, valid and authentic tools. The study also, involved pilot testing of the ready-made tools as some of them were developed for non-teachers and some were developed for non-Mumbai populations.

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Face validity

The face validity pertains to the immediate judgment of the validity of the test in terms of its content. In other words, face validity refers to the relevance of the items to what is being measured. The face validity of the items was established by the researcher by considering the following questions: To what extent did the items measure what they were expected to measure? Were there adequate items to measure that particular aspect? During the process of face validity, some of the items were dropped and some were modified.

Content validity

The content validity of the tools developed by the researcher – scales of professional growth and professional commitment - was established by giving the tools to a team of 18 experts from the fields of education and psychology. Only those items approved by the majority of the judges were retained.

Sampling technique

The present study employed a four-tier testing programme for which samples had to be drawn. The stages for which sampling was done were as follows:

1. Dry run
2. Pre-pilot testing of the tools
3. Pilot testing of the tools
4. Final administration of the tools

The pilot testing was done in two stages as it involved two types of tools – ready-made tools and the researcher-made tools. The pilot testing of the ready-made tools was taken up first and completed. Subsequently, the tools prepared by the researcher were tested.

MBI form Ed [MASLACH and JACKSON, 1986]

MBI form Ed has been taken from the Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual [second edition, 1993]. In this manual, Burnout is perceived as a three dimensional syndrome – the three dimensions being DP, EE and PA. The earlier versions of MBI had dual response dimensions – frequency and intensity. MASLACH and JACKSON developed the current edition of MBI, which measures only the frequency of the Burnout, after having ascertained a fairly high correlation between the frequency and intensity of Burnout. This scale measures the frequency of BO of teachers along a seven-point scale ranging from 0 to 6 – the maximum being 6 and the minimum 0. There are 22 items in this scale covering the three components DP, EE and PA. For each sub-scale, the total score of the component items is computed.

The researcher established the reliability by using the split-half and test-retest methods. The calculated value of the split half was 0.729 for the whole scale [N=58], for DP the value was 0.672, for EE 0.587 and 0.378 for PA. The test-retest value [N=58] with four weeks between administrations was 0.865 for the whole scale, 0.759 for DP, 0.642 for EE and 0.535 for PA. All the 'r' values were found to be significant at the 0.01 level.

Role Efficacy Scale - RES [PAREEK, 1993]

This scale measures the role efficacy or the potential effectiveness of an individual as a role position occupant. The scale measures the three components of role efficacy – role centrality, role making and role linking. The scale has 20 items in all and uses the forced choice technique.

The researcher established split half reliability by administering the scale to teachers. The researcher found a split half reliability coefficient of 0.64 and a test-retest reliability of 0.72 with four weeks between administrations. Both are significant at the 0.01 level [N=58].

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Professional growth scale

This scale was developed by the researcher and consisted of 18 items. The researcher established the reliability by using split half [0.840] and CRONBACH alpha [0.836]. In both cases [N=100] values were significant at 0.01 level.

Professional commitment scale

This scale was developed by the researcher and consisted of 26 items. The reliability was established by using split half [0.760] and CRONBACH alpha [0.761]. In both cases [N=100] values were significant at 0.01 level.

For the purpose of data collection for this study, the researcher employed the Stratified Random Sampling Technique. The criteria of stratification were the level of teaching and the geographical location of the educational institution. Initially stratification criterion was used for selecting the number of teachers from the various levels *i.e.* pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher secondary and degree levels. At the first instance, an attempt was made to take 5% of the total number of teachers in the English medium schools as well as the full time teachers from the higher secondary and degree colleges. Stratification at the second instance was used to draw the sample of teachers from institutions from varying geographical locations of the Metropolis of Greater Mumbai. The final sample size was 932.

Results

Correlation between Burnout and the professional aspects were calculated. Eta coefficient indicating non-linear relationship is used when the correlation computed by Pearson's r is negligible or near zero. Thus, it is possible in many cases to expose that zero.

The results of the correlation between the components of Burnout and the professional aspects are given below.

- A significant non-linear relationship was found between DP, EE and lack of PA and professional qualifications.
- The level of teaching exhibits a significant positive relationship with DP and lack of PA.
- There is a significant negative relationship between EE and level of teaching.
- The professional growth shows a significant non-linear relationship with DP and lack of PA.
- There is no significant relationship, either linear or non-linear, between EE and professional growth.
- The professional commitment has a significant negative relationship with DP and PA.
- There is no significant relationship, either linear or non-linear, between EE and professional commitment.
- The role efficacy has a negative relationship with DP, EE and lack of PA.

TABLE 1

Correlation among the components of Burnout and professional aspects

	DP	*Eta*	*EE*	*Eta*	*PA*	*Eta*
Professional qualifications	-0.025	0.159**	0.004	0.215**	-0.011	0.183**
Level of teaching	0.133**		-0.090**		0.126**	
Professional growth	-0.043	0.083**	-0.041	-0.049	-0.012	0.094*
Professional commitment	-0.129**		-0.012	0.023	-0.062*	
Role efficacy	-0.212**		-0.237**		-0.266**	

***0.01 level* **0.05 level*

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Discussion

Some of the earlier researches have reported that not only the professional training, but the type of professional training also need to be studied in relation to BO [McIntyre 1982[14], Chou 1991[15], Vaz 1994[16]]. The present study corroborated these findings. Those teachers with E.C.C.E. qualifications [Early Childhood and Care Education], who teach at the pre-primary perceived lowest DP and lowest lack of PA, whereas those with DHE [Diploma in Higher Education], perceived highest lack of PA. This is in congruence with the findings on the association between the levels of teaching and BO. Professional qualifications therefore, should be viewed *vis-à-vis* the level of education. Perhaps, the younger students have an endearing quality, which made the teachers of the pre-primary level perceive a sense of satisfaction and build an emotional rapport with them. These teachers could also be influenced by the fact that the Indian community by nature is familial and emotional bonding is stronger. The teachers with DHE training were those who taught at the higher secondary classes and at the degree levels. Perhaps these students, being older, depended less on the teacher and hence, higher level of DP was possible among these teachers.

The earlier studies displayed inconsistent findings *vis-à-vis* grade levels taught. Vayda's profile of a BO teacher [1981][17] included a middle school teacher. Zabel and Zabel [1982][18] predicted that the teachers from Junior High [equivalent of high school] had a high risk of BO. The present study showed that the teachers teaching at the primary and secondary levels perceived more EE. Teaching at the primary and the secondary levels is more structured, formal and more demanding than the teaching at other levels. In view of this, the teachers at this level could perceive more EE than those teaching at other levels. Teachers at the higher secondary and degree level perceived more DP and more lack of PA. These students were older and at this level, the teachers were, perhaps, less involved with the students. The pre-primary teachers perceived the least DP and least lack of PA. These teachers could perceive the least DP and least lack of PA because of the dependence of the young pre-primary children on their teachers and the interaction, which is more informal and less structured as compared to any other level of teaching.

The professional growth opportunities at the school level were not found to be the same as that at the college level. However, the researcher found that a feeling of professional growth could spur an individual towards more involvement and helped to seek personal satisfaction. In fact, intrinsic motivation led to personal growth. Bhagawatwar [1988][19] argues that there are two types of individuals in the society – the growth-oriented and comfort- oriented. The former indulge in the optimum utilization of their potentialities for their development; enjoy shouldering responsibilities, challenges and sacrifice comforts for the sake of development and growth. There is a fit of needs and values of a person with the environment, which supplies the opportunities to meet these needs and values. There is also a fit between the demands of the environment and the abilities of the person to meet these demands. In a person-fit situation, a growth-oriented person may not experience stress, whilst a comfort-oriented person may envisage stress in any situation that deviates from the normal. Perhaps this is the reason why teachers with low professional growth have more DP and high lack of PA.

A significant non-linear relationship was found between professional growth and DP and lack of PA. The teachers with moderate professional growth perceived more DP and lack of PA. Perhaps, these teachers were leaning more towards growth orientation and were feeling alienated and perceived a lack of PA due to inadequate opportunities at the institutions for professional growth. The teachers with high professional growth may have been able to deal with the frustrations by virtue of having growth orientation and those with low professional growth may be possessing comfort orientation which made them perceive more DP and more lack of PA.

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A committed teacher could feel a sense of personal satisfaction when the goals are reached or feel frustrated when the attempts at goal attainment were thwarted. The findings of professional commitment are in concordance with the findings of PIERCE and MOLLOY [1990][20] – highly committed teachers have low lack of PA. The present study has also found a negative relationship between professional commitment and lack of PA.

The negative relationship between role efficacy and the components of BO appear more meaningful at this juncture. When the demands exceed the capacity of the individual, the result is Burnout and when the demands meet the capacity of the individual, peak performance results. Yet, when the demands are less than the capacity of the individual, the result is rust out, the consequences of which are similar to that of BO.

A teacher interacts with the students several times in a day. Besides, administrators, other teachers and the principal make demands on the time and energies of the teachers. Job pressures are, therefore, heavy. An individual teacher with adequate role efficacy can cope with the stressors effectively.

A teacher may feel drained out, and less than satisfied in the class-room but she/he is not necessarily Burnt out. It is not unusual for conscientious teachers to perceive occasional feelings of Burnout.

It is difficult to determine whether BO is arising from the institutional situation or from personal life problems or a combination of both. Just as constant personal problems make it difficult for an individual to be comfortable in the work situation, a satisfying relationship with family and friends produces a supportive network that alleviates the impact of work-related stress. Teacher Burnout can be prevented when the teacher tries to associate with innovation or experimentation that can renew the waning interest in the professional life and provide a break from the routine.

When the teachers find pleasure in working, it is transmitted to the students who are thus given a fighting chance to discover that schools and colleges can be happy places. If, on the other hand, the teacher perceives a feeling of DP, EE and a sense of lack of PA, a feeling of despair hangs over the future of the students. Teacher Burnout has always been around masquerading under the guise of different labels such as job dissatisfaction, low teacher morale and job anxiety. The present study helps to understand the syndrome of Burnout of teachers and how to prevent it.

Comparing the mean scores of the current study with that of MASLACH and JACKSON's study [1993][21], the researcher observed that the current study had lower mean scores on all the three components of Burnout. Table 2 presents the mean scores of both.

TABLE 2

Comparison of the mean scores of DP, EE and PA

Research		*N*	*DP*	*EE*	*PA*
Maslach Jackson	1993	4,163	11.000	21.250	33.540
Present Research	1998	932	3.882	16.869	11.607

In comparison with MASLACH and JACKSON's study, the mean scores of DP and lack of PA are low for the present study. The reason could be that perhaps the Indian culture, being familialistic, makes an individual less depersonalised. Secondly, the Indian culture, with its emphasis on fatalism, could make an individual accept the stressful situations with a certain amount of equanimity.

There is not much of a difference in the mean scores of EE. MASLACH's sample of teachers hail from a society, which is more developed and technologically advanced. They could also be more answerable and more accountable. Perhaps they also have higher expectations. This could be the reason for a higher lack of PA scores. In the urban set up, education has become more commercialized. Teachers have found more avenues for making

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money. Although running coaching classes and giving tuition a common occurrence among the teaching fraternity in the urban set up, could lead to a sense of depersonalization, it could also lead to exhaustion from being over worked. At the same time it could also lead to a sense of accomplishment. Perhaps, this could be the reason for the lower score of PA in the current study.

The present study has lower levels of DP, EE and lack of PA than that of MASLACH's study. The reason could be that MASLACH's study was conducted on teachers from three levels whereas the present study involved teachers from five levels. However, low DP and EE could also be due to a certain amount of denial – conscious or unconscious – on the part of the individual teachers concerned since, such feelings are not granted the social acceptance in a teacher's role. The study confirms that there is considerable amount of BO among the teachers in the metropolis of Mumbai and that teachers undergo BO more in terms of EE than DP or lack of PA. Role efficacy is an important factor that has negative association with all the three components of BO.

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